Ministry of Government Relations

Plan for 2015-16

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Government of Saskatchewan

Statement from the Minister

The Honourable Jim Reiter

Minister of Government Relations

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Government Relations' Plan for 2015-16. Government's Direction and Budget for 2015-16 is focused on '*Keeping Saskatchewan Strong*,' balancing building for the future with fiscal responsibility.

Government Relations works with a diverse range of partners. By working together we can most effectively respond to the challenges of growth, promote economic opportunity, and enhance the quality of life for all our residents.

Government Relations will report on progress made toward this Plan in the 2015-16 Annual Report.

Government of Saskatchewan

Response to Government Direction

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to *Keeping Saskatchewan Strong*. The province faces challenges due to volatile resource revenue; however, Saskatchewan's economy is diverse and resilient. There are strengths in many sectors from agriculture and manufacturing to resources such as potash and uranium.

With controlled spending and continued support for the conditions necessary for economic growth, the Government will meet the needs of our growing province. Investments in people and infrastructure continue to support Government's commitment to establishing Saskatchewan as the best place to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life.

Saskatchewan's Vision

"... to be the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Meeting the challenges of growth	Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Government's vision and four goals provide the framework for ministries, agencies and third parties to align their programs and services and meet the needs of Saskatchewan's citizens.

All ministries and agencies will report on progress in their 2015-16 annual reports.

Operational Plan

Mandate Statement

With responsibility for municipal relations, public safety, and First Nations, Métis and northern affairs, the Ministry actively engages a diverse range of partners and stakeholders to: effectively plan for and respond to the opportunities and challenges of growth; provide leadership and direction so that integrated public safety services are available to communities and their residents; and support responsive and responsible government.

Government Goals

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Meeting the challenges of growth	Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Strategic priority in support of the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*: build relationships and develop partnerships with and between municipalities, First Nations and Métis communities, and industry that advance government's agenda

Ministry Goal

Communities and individuals are well positioned to benefit from the opportunities and address the challenges of economic and population growth

Strategy

Enhance regional and municipal planning to address economic growth opportunities and challenges

Key Actions

- Lead a regional planning dialogue to discuss successes and challenges with planning commissions and other regional planning groups.
  - Develop a workshop or training resources based on the information gathered at the regional planning dialogue.
  - Assist in the planning and delivery of a provincial event focusing on regional planning in cooperation with the Regina Regional Opportunities Commission.
- Assist northern municipalities in the planning and financing of northern municipal subdivision developments.

Strategy

Coordinate the multi-ministry/agency Rapid Growth Communities Team to establish advanced relationships with municipalities experiencing rapid growth, and increase the visibility and accessibility of available provincial assistance

Key Action

- Coordinate the Rapid Growth Communities Team's expansion to work with additional municipalities experiencing rapid growth, complete high level assessments of priority provincial and local infrastructure and services, and facilitate delivery of desired available provincial assistance.

Strategy

Develop innovative tools and projects related to municipalities and public safety in support of the Plan for Growth

Key Actions

- Develop a "readiness for growth" checklist to help municipalities better prepare for and address the challenges associated with growth.
- Provide up-to-date municipal and public safety data, information and tools on the government's website to help target and address priority issues for local government.

Strategy

Develop new policies and a common framework to provide consistency and fairness in municipal land annexation agreements

Key Action

- Develop an annexation compensation guideline and principles to help resolve disputes over annexation compensation where voluntary agreements cannot be reached among municipalities.

Performance Measures:

Subdivision applications approved/lots created
By March 31, 2016, 1,000 subdivision applications will be approved, creating 3,000 sites.

Regional training workshops
By March 31, 2016, two regional training workshops will be delivered.

Planning districts established
By March 31, 2016, two new planning districts will be established.

Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws
By March 31, 2016, ten new Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws will be approved.

Ministry Goal

Residents, partners, and communities are effectively engaged in achieving the government's goals

Strategy

Engage First Nations, Métis and northern organizations and federal and municipal governments on provincial priorities

Key Actions

- Build upon the government's efforts to improve participation of Aboriginal people in the economy.
- Improve the capacity for northern municipal administration and governance with respect to relationships among communities and residents through the Northern Municipal Trust Account Capacity Building Program.
- Implement a strategy to address property tax arrears in both the Northern Saskatchewan Administration District and incorporated communities in the North.

Strategy

Promote northerners' understanding of Saskatchewan's uranium mining industry, and raise awareness of resource industry impacts on northern communities

Key Actions

- Deliver the Northern Saskatchewan Environmental Quality Committee program, enhancing communication among the uranium industry, northern communities and government regulators. Implement improvements identified in a program review in 2014-15.
- Produce the annual "Northern Socioeconomic Benefits Summary" on northern Saskatchewan mining operations.

Ministry Goal

Improve education, employment and economic outcomes for First Nations, Métis and northern communities

Strategy

Advance shared policy objectives through government programs that align with First Nations, Métis and Northern needs

Key Actions

- Facilitate discussions on behalf of government with First Nations interested in pursuing shared objectives to achieve practical outcomes.
- Partner with innovative projects to improve outcomes.
- Sponsor events that benefit First Nations and Métis people.
- Co-manage, with the Ministry of Environment, the mine surface lease agreements in northern Saskatchewan which require the best efforts of mine operations to engage, train, employ and contract northerners.

Government Goals

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Meeting the challenges of growth	Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Strategic priority in support of the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*: be an enabling partner in building safe, healthy and vibrant communities

Ministry Goal

Saskatchewan communities are prepared for disasters and emergencies

Strategy

Deliver an effective disaster assistance program that maximizes federal cost-recovery

Key Action

- Continue to improve the administration of the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) and review options around establishing a more independent PDAP appeal process.

Strategy

Continually improve provincial emergency preparedness, mitigation and interoperability

Key Actions

- Develop research and development partnerships for the advancement of public safety communication technologies (Sask911 system and Provincial Public Safety Telecommunications Network (PPSTN)).
- Develop and implement a province-wide public alerting system.
- Develop and deliver the Civil Service Response Team; a program that will establish a resource pool of trained staff from ministries, Crowns and agencies that could be redeployed to assist during an emergency.

Strategy

In partnership with the federal government and First Nations develop targeted public safety programs on First Nations communities

Key Actions

- Support Kindergarten to Grade 3 fire prevention training to meet local requirements in First Nations communities.
- Facilitate the development of support services and/or mutual aid agreements for First Nations emergency services, including participation in PPSTN, dispatching and data collection systems.

Performance Measures

Amendments to relevant legislation, regulations and PDAP guidelines
Amendments are completed and communicated by March 31, 2016.

Number of municipalities participating in branch data collection programs
Training has been provided to 247 of the 373 municipalities in the province with local fire departments. The goal is to deliver training in the Fire Data Management (FDM) Records Management software system to the remaining 126 fire departments by March 2016.

Number of communities that actively support fire prevention programs
Emergency Management and Fire Safety (EMFS) staff will share fire prevention information with local fire departments a minimum of six times annually, including Fire Prevention Week. In Saskatchewan, the program will reach more than 25,000 Kindergarten to Grade 3 students in communities throughout the province.

Number of First Nations communities participating in provincial public safety program and services
Working with First Nations communities, EMFS staff will assist the local municipal fire chiefs with the delivery of fire prevention and public education programs available through the Ministry.

Ministry Goal

Saskatchewan's buildings comply with public safety codes and standards

Strategy

Enable and promote effective and safe buildings, facilities and equipment

Key Actions

- Implement a new building official training model.
- Pursue the harmonization of codes adoption process with other western provinces.
- Renew the Safety Standards Agreement and monitor the effectiveness of the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan.
- Lead implementation of energy efficiencies technology.

Strategy

Modernize the regulatory environment to align with evolving gas and electrical technologies

Key Action

- Align the licensing system with the inspections system for gas and electrical.

Ministry Goal

Municipal infrastructure effectively meets the needs of communities and their growth

Strategy

Maintain the municipal revenue sharing commitment that grows with the province's economy

Key Action

- Provide the equivalent of one full point of the Provincial Sales Tax to the municipal sector.

Strategy

Provide long-term, predictable funding to municipalities to support provincial interests in municipal priorities, including municipal infrastructure

Key Action

- Provide funding through federal/provincial programs, such as the New Building Canada Fund – Provincial Territorial Infrastructure Component, and through provincial programs, such as the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative, to assist municipalities with infrastructure investments to meet the opportunities and challenges of growth.

Strategy

Support effective and sustainable municipal infrastructure management policies and practices

Key Action

- Facilitate discussions with northern municipalities and First Nations interested in pursuing practical shared arrangements such as Regional Municipal Service Districts and other forms of shared service delivery.

Strategy

Implement and expand northern community contributions to water and sewer projects

Key Action

- Provide programs such as the Northern Capital Grants Program, Northern Municipal Revenue Sharing program, and Northern Water and Sewer Program to fund infrastructure within the North.

Performance Measures

Municipal Revenue Sharing
Funding will be provided to assist municipalities in addressing local priorities.

Annual Municipal Funding
Funding will be provided to municipalities through several programs to support provincial interests in municipal priorities, including municipal infrastructure.

Government Goals

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Meeting the challenges of growth	Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Strategic priority in support of the Ministry's mandate: support responsive and responsible government

Ministry Goal

Enhance the effectiveness and capacity of municipal governance

Strategy

Raise municipal officials' awareness of their general municipal administration roles and responsibilities

Key Action

- Partner with municipal associations and other parties to design and deliver workshops on general municipal administration to municipal officials.

Strategy

Identify, evaluate, and initiate strategic and innovative improvements to Saskatchewan's local government system

Key Action

- Develop legislative provisions to help strengthen the municipal statutory framework.

Ministry Goal

Ensure a fair and effective property tax regime

Strategy

Provide support and analysis to ensure an effective and efficient property assessment and taxation regime exists in the province

Key Actions

- Ensure all municipalities comply with Education Property Tax (EPT) collection, remission and reporting requirements.
- Report and analyze northern education and municipal property tax exemptions, abatements and arrears, where feasible.
- Undertake a review of Potash Tax Sharing legislation and regulations to address issues raised by the municipal sector.
- Monitor and analyze the use of tax tools by municipalities on an annual basis to ensure a fair and equitable municipal tax system.
- Support the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency to ensure a responsible and responsive property assessment and municipal tax system.
- Develop options regarding other fees and charges applied by municipalities onto the business sector.

Performance Measure

A Saskatchewan property tax policy that supports growth and ensures responsive and responsible government
EPT Mill Rates are announced with the provincial budget and municipal compliance (%) with EPT collection, remission and reporting requirements are improved or consistent with the previous year.

Ministry Goal

Fulfill government's legal obligations under Treaty Land Entitlement

Strategy

Negotiate Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) settlement agreements with Canada and the First Nations and improve the coordination and implementation of the TLE processes under existing agreements

Key Actions

- Continue to participate in negotiations of new settlement agreements with Canada and Ahtahkakoop, Mistawasis and Sakimay First Nations.
- Increase knowledge and awareness within government and with our municipal partners regarding TLE through TLE presentations and information sessions and other communication and educational tools.

Ministry Goal

Effective implementation of government's *First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework*

Strategy

Improve understanding and consistent implementation of the *First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework (CPF)* to fulfill legal obligations and provide opportunities for meaningful consultation

Key Actions

- Continue to work with consulting ministries, Crowns and agencies to build understanding and support consistent application of the CPF through staff training and learning events.
- Increase awareness and enhance understanding of the CPF through presentations/outreach events.

Performance Measure

Increased awareness and improved understanding of Saskatchewan's First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework
By March 31, 2016, the Ministry will have worked with clients and partners to provide internal training and outreach events on the CPF.

Ministry Goal

A modern legislative and regulatory framework that supports the Ministry's mandate

Strategy

Prepare legislative and regulatory changes on an ongoing basis to address provincial and Ministry priorities and to respond to sector and public concerns

Key Actions

- Review and improve municipal and public safety legislation and regulations to meet the evolving needs of municipal, public safety and other stakeholders, the province, and the public to ensure that legislation achieves responsive and responsible government.
- Review and revise local government election legislation to better meet municipal needs and protect public interests.

Strategy

Ensure the Ministry's legislation, regulations and policies align with the government's commitment to be effective partners in supporting growth and enhancing the quality of life for Saskatchewan residents

Key Actions

- Implement a new Ministry Administration Act that better meets the needs of the Ministry and reflects Ministry responsibilities.
- Bring forward strategic amendments to municipal legislation and regulations that position municipalities to better plan for and deal with growth and development issues and challenges.
- Initiate review of The *Planning and Development Act, 2007.*
- Update legislation and regulations pertaining to public safety technologies and standards.
- Undertake an ongoing review of Ministry business-related regulations to keep them current, to remove red tape, and to ensure labour and trade mobility.

Performance Measures

Identification and preparation of strategic legislative, regulatory and policy changes
The Ministry will identify and deliver legislative, regulatory or policy initiatives that: enable administrative, operational, and governance improvements at the local level; support improved public safety; and meet a priority or objective of government.

Review of business regulations and development of growth-related policies
The Ministry will review or develop business related regulations or growth-related policies that support or advance growth plan objectives, red tape reduction, trade and labour mobility, and regulatory modernization.

Highlights

The following are key announcements from the Ministry of Government Relations' 2015-16 Budget:

- $265.3 million for municipal revenue sharing funding, consisting of the following:
  - $170.5 million to urban municipalities;
  - $75.0 million to rural municipalities; and,
  - $19.8 million to northern municipalities.
- $73.2 million for municipal infrastructure programs, consisting of:
  - $13.8 million to meet project commitments under various federal-provincial infrastructure programs, including $10.0M under the New Building Canada Fund;
  - $57.1 million in flow-through municipal infrastructure funding provided by the Gas Tax Program; and,
  - $2.3 million to meet program commitments under the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative, including renewal of the program.
- $10.9 million, a $0.8 million increase, to the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency. The increase includes $0.6 million in capital funding for a new technology development project and $0.2 million in increased operating funding.

Public Safety:

- $5.7 million for Emergency Management and Fire Safety, an increase of $1.7 million to address operational needs; and,
- $1.8 million for the provincial contribution to capital upgrades as a partner in the Provincial Public Safety Telecommunications Network, a decrease of $0.4 million to reflect funding requirements.

Partnerships with First Nations:

- $74.0 million, a $2.6 million decrease based on casino profit forecasts, for gaming agreement transfers which will foster economic and social development in First Nation and Métis communities in Saskatchewan.

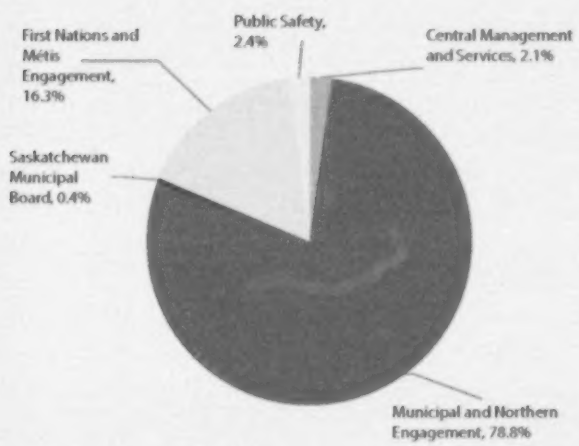
Financial Summary

2015-16 Estimates	(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	9,907
First Nations and Métis Engagement	77,131
Municipal and Northern Engagement	372,465
Saskatchewan Municipal Board	1,825
Public Safety	11,105
Provincial Public Safety Telecommunications Network	---
Total Appropriation	**472,433**
Capital Asset Acquisitions	(1,780)
Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment	2,668
Total Expense	**473,321**

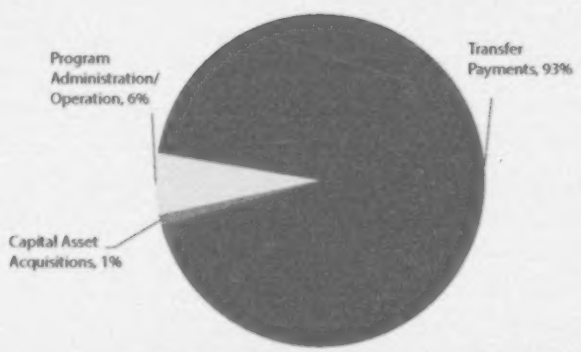
FTE Staff Complement	244.1

For more information, see the Budget Estimates at: http://www.saskatchewan.ca/budget

Ministry Spending by Subvote


First Nations and Métis Engagement, 16.3%
Public Safety, 2.4%
Central Management and Services, 2.1%
Saskatchewan Municipal Board, 0.4%
Municipal and Northern Engagement, 78.8%

Ministry Spending by Classification



For More Information

Please visit the Ministry's website at http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/government-relations

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